

Law Library Self-Help Programs and Services Survey Executive Summary April 2014

The Law Librarians' Working Group of the Self-Represented Litigation Network surveyed law libraries in the summer of 2013 about their services, including self-help programs. The full survey results are available at: www.selfhelpsupport.org/surveys/

153 libraries from 33 states, Canada and Guam participated. Respondents included state and federal court law libraries, county, state, Supreme Court and academic law libraries, and one prison library. Ninety-nine percent reported that they provide services to self-represented litigants. Many indicated that they partner with the courts, public libraries, and legal aid organizations to provide service to the self-represented. Law libraries reported that they support pro bono attorneys and participate in access to justice commission activities.

Library Reference and General Services:

- traditional and computerized legal research help and referrals to other programs
- e-mail reference, pathfinders, guides, and explanations of the legal process
- legal information websites for self-represented parties
- collections of materials for the non-lawyer
- document delivery of resources in the library by fax, scan, and delivery
- referral sheets to their library
- chat reference
- court forms: forms instructions, forms in plain language, forms in multiple languages, form document assembly programs, assistance with filling out forms, forms creation, writing of form instructions
- public computers with access to the Internet
- e-filing support
- LEP service with books and/or brochures in multiple languages, bi-lingual staff, and provision for either interpreters or access to a language line.
- services to prisoners

Self-Help Centers and Programs:

- legal clinics
- lawyer in the library programs
- mediation programs
- self-help centers: in the law library, in the law library but staffed by another organization, support for self-help centers in another location
- educational services: workshops and webinars

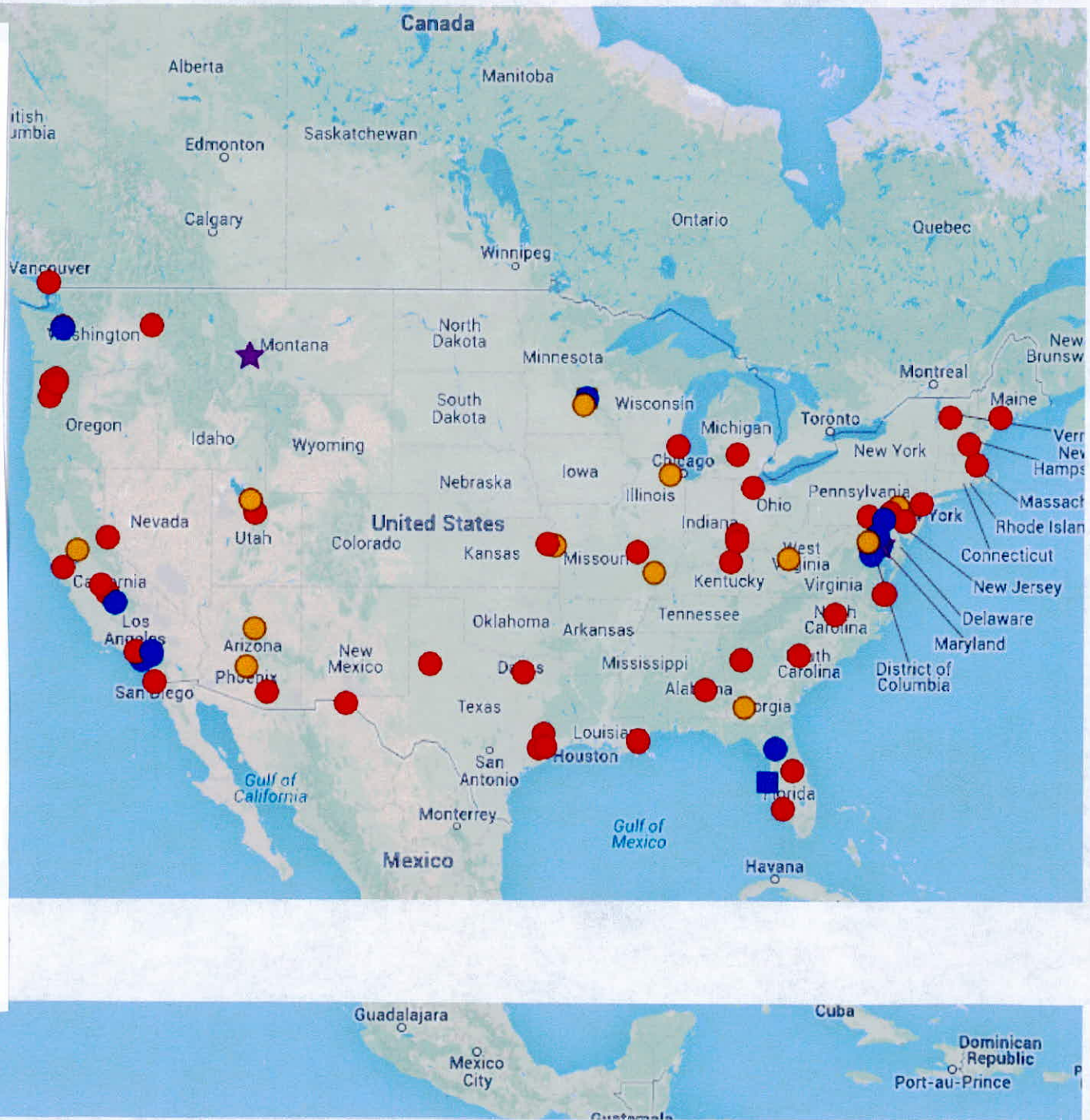
Conclusion

Law libraries provide valuable services to self-represented parties. They provide traditional broad reference and informational services. They provide programs developed for the self-represented litigant such as clinics and self-help centers. They fill gaps in services that can result from other agencies' intake restrictions, and have resources that are hard to duplicate at other agencies. Even those self-represented parties served directly by a program geared for them can be directed to a local law library for additional services. With the wide and varied array of services to assist the self-represented, law libraries make ideal partners in providing service to self-represented litigants.

Libraries & SH Services

- Red Dot = Libraries who responded to survey
- Orange Dot = Libraries with Self-Help Centers
- Red Square = Libraries with other SH services
- Blue Dot = Libraries that partner w/ ext. SHC
- ★ Purple Star = Libraries that have all three
- Blue Square = Libraries with OS + ES
- Orange Square = Libraries with LS + OS

- Alaska
- Guam



2013 Survey SRLN